

**RURAL BANGLADESH  
ADB to support  
women  
entrepreneurs**  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday signed \$200 million loan agreements with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to help small- and medium-sized enterprises in rural Bangladesh gain access to medium- and long-term credit.

"Developing SMEs is a key to accelerating growth, and reducing poverty, income inequality, and regional disparity," said Kazuhiko Higuchi, country director for Bangladesh of ADB.

"This project will help small businesses and cottage industries in rural areas, especially those run by women, with better access to long-term capital. The project will also help women entrepreneurs develop skills to manage their enterprises more efficiently."

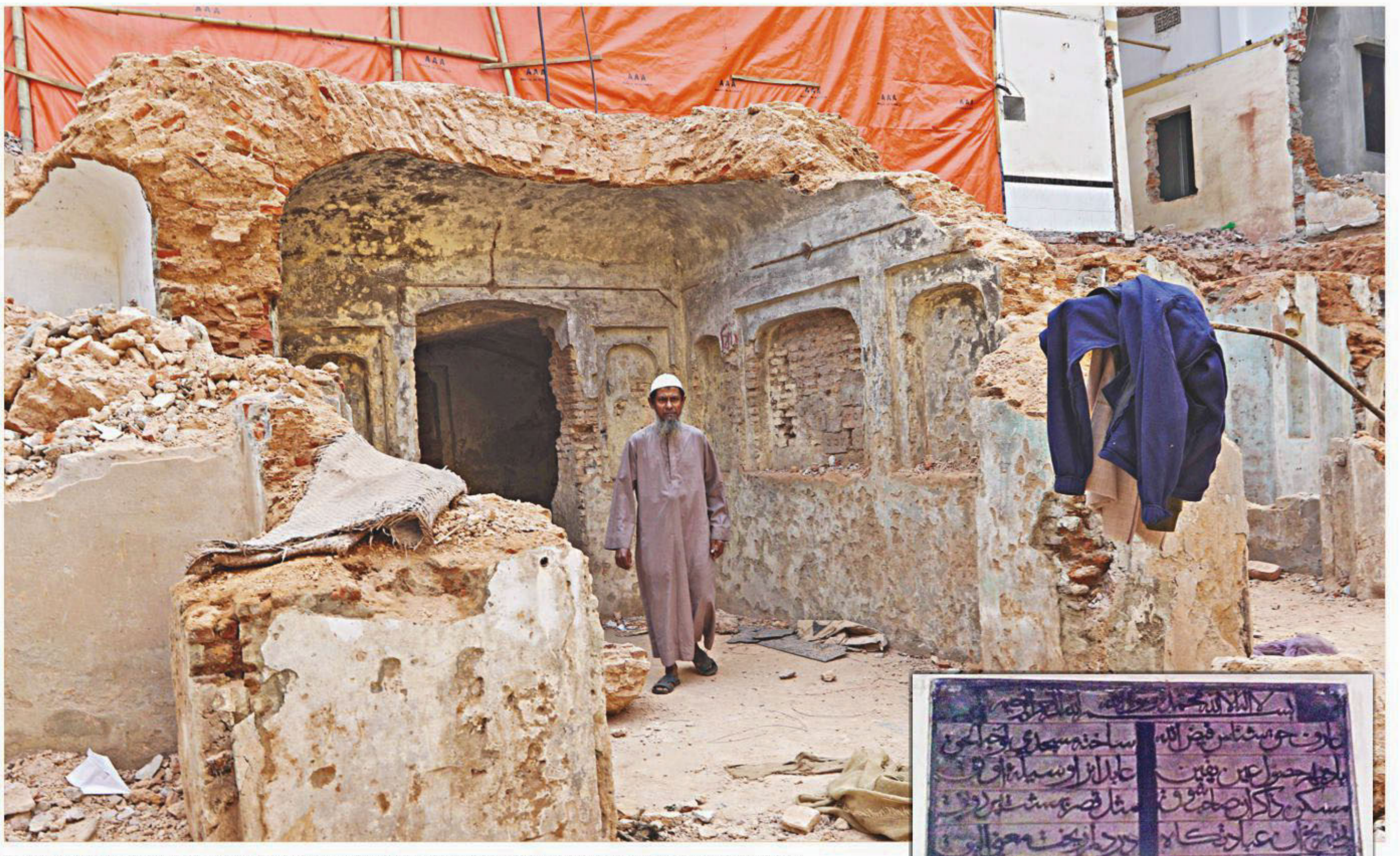
The Second Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Development Project primarily focuses on small firms outside the metropolitan areas of Dhaka and Chittagong.

At least 15 percent of the assistance will be for women entrepreneurs. Priority will be on women engaged in subsistence trade and retail activities, who typically have limited access to finance.

The project includes \$2 million in technical assistance from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction to help establish incubation facilities with the aim to promote entrepreneurship.

This assistance will also help develop SME clusters that will boost access to long-term financing, and strengthen backward and forward linkages with the formal sector, particularly the export-driven industries.

The Manila-based donor and the Financial Institutions Division of the finance ministry is the executing agency of the project, while Bangladesh Bank and the SME Foundation are the implementing agencies.



The remnants of the 300-year-old Azimpur Gorostan Shahi Masjid, which has been demolished for constructing a new one. Inset, an inscription in Persian language, attached to a building adjacent to the mosque stating the year it was built.

PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS



**New mosque to replace 300 year old Mughal structure**

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN and TAWFIQUE ALI

Red sandstones are scattered everywhere, while dismantled thick pillars and cave-like doors remain as the only witness to the Mughal period as the around 300 years old mosque – Azimpur Gorostan Shahi Masjid – has been demolished under the nose of the authorities for erecting a six-storied new one.

Now the debris that surrounds the area is the only remnants of a place where once the devotees used to pray.

Instead of preserving the two-storied mosque, which was built in 1711, the Department of Archaeology gave the mosque committee a go ahead for the demolition, since the mosque was not listed as a heritage site.

According to the Antiquities Act, 1968 (amended in 1976) all buildings

or establishments more than 100 years of age can be protected by the state for their historical importance.

"We wanted to know from the Department of Archaeology pointing out the mosque's age whether it's listed as a heritage site. But they informed it was not," said advocate Abul Kasem Mridha, general secretary of the mosque committee.

That is why the committee decided to construct a new mosque and started the demolition work from November 2016 as the structure was in a dilapidated condition, he said, adding that the mosque is a waqf (charitable) property.

He said the committee sent the letter to the Department of Archaeology on June 9, 2013 and the authorities responded to their query on June 30, 2013.

Visiting the spot yesterday, The

Daily Star found the demolition work of the already dismantled mosque had been suspended after the incident drew media attention.

There is an inscription written in Persian language, attached to a building adjacent to the mosque. "It mentions the year the mosque was built by one Fayzul Alam," said Mridha quoting a Persian language expert of Dhaka University.

According to the Banglapedia, the mosque is mentioned as one of the heritage establishments of Lalbagh.

Md Altaf Hossain, director general of the Department of Archaeology, said they are aware of the old mosque's demolition and made a probe body including members of the Institute of Architects Bangladesh to determine how the old relics could be preserved.

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**Ties with Dhaka stand truly transformed**

Says Indian foreign secy S Jaishankar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India yesterday said its relations with Bangladesh stand "truly transformed" and made out a strong case that New Delhi should steadily build up its influence and capabilities as part of efforts to usher in a multi-polar world order.

Indian Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar said this while delivering the theme address at the second Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi.

The Raisina Dialogue is India's flagship geo-political conference held annually.

"...In our immediate region, we have worked relentlessly to encourage and promote a stronger sense of connectivity, cooperation and contacts," he observed, adding, "As a result, ties with neighbours like Bangladesh stand truly transformed."

His remarks came a day after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said, while opening the Dialogue, that India has reached a greater political understanding with Bangladesh through connectivity and infrastructure projects and settlement of land and maritime boundaries.

In an apparent reference to Pakistan opposing a Saarc Motor Vehicles Agreement proposed by the Indian prime minister in Saarc Summit in November 2014, Jaishankar said, "We hope to partially remedy this through the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) sub-regional grouping."

He also expressed hope that Bangladesh and other member-countries of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec) can be channeled towards more far-reaching initiatives.



Jaker Party Chairman Mustafa Amir Faysal meets President Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban yesterday, as part of the president's ongoing dialogue with the political parties to form a new Election Commission.

PHOTO: PTID

**GLITCH IN PM'S FLIGHT  
2 Biman staff  
remanded again**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed two engineers of Biman Bangladesh Airlines – Shah Alam, engineer (technician); and Najmul Haq, engineer (officer) -- on a five-day fresh remand each in connection with a case filed over the technical glitch of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's flight on November 27.

Metropolitan Magistrate Nurunnahar Yasmeen passed the order after Mahub Alam, an inspector of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit and the case's investigation officer, produced them before it with a 10-day remand prayer.

Earlier, they were remanded for seven days. The IO said they need to be remanded again to gather more information.

**Truck fatally hits two youths in Dhaka**

Two others killed in two dists

CITY DESK

Two youths were killed and another was injured as a truck hit a motorcycle they were riding on Nazimuddin Road in the old part of Dhaka early yesterday.

Akash, 18, and Sunny, 20, were pronounced dead when they were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Shamimur Rashid Talukder, officer-in-charge of Chawkbazar Police Station, told The Daily Star.

Ripon, 20, injured in the accident that took place around 1:30am, was admitted to the hospital, the OC said, adding, police arrested the truck driver, Sheikh Hanif, 50, and seized the vehicle.

In Bogra, a person was killed and three others were injured as a bus rammmed an engine-run van carrying them on the Bogra-Dhaka highway at Mirzapur Bazar in Ranirhat area of Sherpur upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was Laily Begum, 45, of Ranirhat area in Sherpur upazila of the district.

The injured were rushed to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital of Bogra.

In Mymensingh, an engineer of a private farm was killed as a truck rammmed his motorcycle on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Seedstore area of Bhaluka upazila on Tuesday evening.

The deceased was Rasel Parvez, 35, of Jibonnagar in Chuadanga.

**Why Tangail MP Rana won't get bail: HC**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has sought explanation from the government in four weeks why Tangail's Awami League lawmaker Amanur Rahman Khan Rana should not be granted bail in the freedom fighter Faruk Ahmed murder case.

Justice Sheikh Abdul Awal and Justice Md Khasruzzaman came up with the rule following a petition filed by Rana, now in jail, seeking bail. Earlier on Sunday, the HC fixed yesterday for passing an order after hearing a bail petition filed by him.

The bullet-hit body of Faruk, also a district AL leader, was found on January 18, 2013.

Later, a murder case was filed.

**KUNIO HOSHI  
MURDER**

**Court starts recording testimonies**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, from Rangpur

A Rangpur Court yesterday started recording deposition in Japanese national Kunio Hoshi killing case.

Rezaul Karim, the then officer-in-charge of Kaunia Police Station, and Ashraf Islam, chairman of Sorai union parishad of Kaunia upazila, gave their statements.

Three unidentified bike riders shot Kunio Hoshi, 67, to dead at Aluwari village in Kaunia upazila of Rangpur on October 3, 2015. The court fixed January 23, 24 and 25 for recording depositions of 15 witnesses.

**SC releases full verdict over 2004 grenade attack on UK envoy**

Death row convicts to seek review

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court has released the full text of its verdict that upheld the death penalty of three militants of Harkatul-Jihad al-Islami (Huji), including its chief Mufti Abdul Hannan, in a case filed for the 2004 grenade attack on Anwar Chowdhury, the then UK envoy in Bangladesh.

The apex court released the verdict on Tuesday clearing the way for the government to start the process for executing the three condemned militants. Two other death-row convicts are Sharif Shahedul Alam Bipul and Delwar Hossain alias Ripon.

Attorney General Mahubey Alam told The Daily Star yesterday that the jail authorities will start the process after receiving the verdict's certified copy.

The death penalty will be executed in 21 to 28 days after the trial court issues the death warrant against them as per the Jail Code, he said.

The execution will be halted if the convicts move any review petition, he added.

Defence lawyer of the convicts Mohammad Ali said his clients will move a review petition before the Appellate Division against its verdict.

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**Journalists agitate for 9th wage board**

BSS, Dhaka

Journalists yesterday held rallies and staged demonstrations across the country including the capital demanding formation of the ninth wage board.

Addressing a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club, journalist leaders said programmes for a greater movement will be announced, if the wage board is not formed by January 31.

DUI faction President Shaban Mahmud, BFUJ faction President Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, former secretary general Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, DRU President Shakhawat Hossain Badsha, and Nari Sangbadik Kendra President Nasimun Ara Huq Minu, spoke among others.



Lawyers demonstrate inside Chittagong Court Building yesterday afternoon after the court rejected the bail petition of an accused lawyer and his wife in a human trafficking case. They also got into a scuffle with police, broke windows of the judge's chamber room, and stopped journalists from taking pictures and snatched some of their cameras, according to police and eye witnesses. The two accused were arrested from Chittagong airport on charge of helping two persons including a Rohingya woman to go to Saudi Arabia with fake Umrah visa documents. They however secured bail after their hearing was held in another court.

PHOTO: STAR